The Tenderness of Jesus

A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, JUNE 8, 1890,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

"We have not a High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." Hebrews 4:15.

BELOVED, we have a High Priest. All that Israel had under the Law we still retain, only we have the substance of which they had only the shadow. "We have an Altar, of which they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle." We have a Sacrifice, which, being once offered, forever avails. We have "One greater than the temple," and He is to us the Mercy Seat and the High Priest. Take it for granted that all the blessings of the Law remain under the Gospel. Christ has restored that which He took not away, but He has not taken away one single possible blessing of the Law—on the contrary, He has secured all to His people.

I look to the Old Testament and I see certain blessings appended to the Covenant of Works and I say to myself by faith, "Those blessings are mine, for I have kept the Covenant of Works in the Person of my Covenant Head and Surety. Every blessing which is promised to perfect obedience belongs to me, since I present to God a perfect obedience in the Person of my great Representative, the Lord Jesus Christ." Every real spiritual blessing which Israel had, you have as a Christian.

Note, next, not only do we read that there is a High Priest, but in the 14th verse we read, "We have a High Priest." It would be a small matter to us to know that such-and-such blessings existed—the great point is to know by faith that we personally possess them! What is the great High Priest to me unless He is mine? What is a Savior but a word to tantalize my despairing spirit, until I can say that this Savior is mine? Every blessing of the Covenant is prized in proportion as it is had— "We have a High Priest." I pray you, never talk of the blessings and Doctrines of Grace as matters apart from personal possession, but seek habitually to enjoy and experience them! That was a grand exclamation of Thomas, "My Lord, and my God," and this is a sweet word for the saints—"We have a High Priest."

Beloved, come boldly to the Throne of God for you have a High Priest. Grasp firmly by faith the choice favors which your interest in the Lord Jesus secures to you. It is precious to reflect that Jesus, as High Priest, is still ours, though, according to the text, He "is passed into the heavens." He does not forget us now that He has passed through the lower heavens into the Heaven of heavens where He reigns supreme in His Father's Glory. He is still touched with a feeling of our infirmities. Though He has left behind Him all pain, suffering and infirmity, He retains to the fullest the fellow feelings which His life of humiliation has developed in Him.

"The Man is near of kin unto us" and no difference of situation or condition has changed His kinship or the boundless love which goes with it. Our Joseph, though Lord of all Egypt, is our Brother, still, and beneath the vestments of a king there beats the heart of love. Think of our High Priest as not having laid aside that breastplate of His on which our names are engraved, nor the "two onyx stones, set in pouches of gold," which He wore upon His shoulders, inscribed in the same manner. On His heart and on His shoulders our exalted High Priest bears all His people—His heart and His arms are both engaged for them—His love and His power are engrossed by them.

Our Lord carries in His pierced hands, feet and side, the memorials of His redeemed, as it is written, "I have engraved you upon the palms of My hands." We have in Him who has passed into the heavens as truly merciful a High Priest as if He were still on this side of the veil ministering as in the day of His humiliation. Put those things together and read them experimentally, each Believer for himself. We have a High Priest—we have Him now—and while He is beyond the heavens, in the Glory of glories, He is still ours, in all tenderness exercising His Grace and power towards us.

Observe here that the Apostle delights to dwell upon the majesty and glory of our High Priest. What does he say? "Seeing, then, that we have a great High Priest," as if Aaron and all his sons were little personages compared with Him!

In Jesus, the Son of God, we have "a great High Priest." The long succeeding line of priests called of God to stand before Him in the holy place on earth have all passed away—but we have "a great High Priest," seeing He never dies. These men were all faulty—but we have a "great High Priest," who is absolutely perfect. These men did but humbly represent Him, as in a dewdrop the sun may be reflected. But He is the true High Priest between God and man and therefore the epithet "great" is put before His name as it could not be before any other.

He is "the great High Priest," for He has passed, not within a material veil into some inner sanctuary encompassed with curtains, but into the heavens where God dwells! His name is Jesus. There is His Manhood—He was born of a woman to save His people from their sins. But we read further, "Jesus, the Son of God." There is His Deity. He is the Only-Begotten of the Father—as glorious in His Godhead as He is gracious in His Manhood. Paul delights to dwell upon these points of glory.

But when he has done so, it seems to occur to him that when we consider the greatness of our High Priest, some poor trembling sinners may be afraid to draw near to Him—and the Apostle ever has a longing eye towards drawing souls to Jesus. Therefore he falls back upon our Lord's tenderness. Great as He is, our High Priest is not One who "cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities." He puts a negative on that fear which might naturally arise in trembling bosoms. This morning, being myself more than usually compassed with infirmities, I desire to speak, as a weak and suffering preacher, of that High

Priest who is full of compassion—and my longing is that any who are low in spirit, faint, despondent, or even at the point of total despair, may take heart to approach the Lord Jesus!

Let no man be afraid of Him who is the embodiment of gentleness and compassion! Though conscious of your own infirmities, you may feel free to come to Him who will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax! I want to speak so tenderly that even the despairing may look up and may feel a drawing towards our Beloved Master who is so graciously touched with a feeling of our infirmities.

I. So I am going to begin my sermon by saying of our blessed Lord, HE HAS ASSUMED A VERY TENDER OFFICE. If the office of high priest had been fully carried out, as it ought to have been, it would have been one of the most tenderly helpful that could have been devised. A king may render great aid to the unhappy, but, on the other hand, he is a terror to evil-doers—a high priest is in the highest sense "ordained for men," and he is the friend and benefactor of the most wretched.

It was intended, first, that by the high priest God should commune with men. That needs a person of great tenderness. A mind that is capable of listening to God and understanding, in a measure, what He teaches, had need be very tender so as to interpret the lofty sense into the lowly language of humanity. If the man is to come from among the Infinite down to the ignorance and narrow capacities of mortal men, he had need be tender as a nurse to her children. Great philosophers have not always been great teachers—their very profundity has prevented their translating their great thoughts into the speech of common minds. There is a possibility of knowing so much that the knowledge becomes crowded up and there remains no possible gate for the orderly going out of such a multitude of thoughts.

Great knowledge needs great patience if it would instruct the ignorant. The great loaves of wisdom must be broken and crumbed into a basin of milk for the children. How few remember the words, "Let the children first be filled"! Now, the high priest had to be a man who could commune with God and listen to the sacred Oracle—and then he was bound to come out to common men of the wilderness, or men of the farm, and tell them what he had heard in secret from the Infinite God! He must mediate and allow his mouth to be God's mouth to the people—for "the priest's lips should keep knowledge." What he had grasped from the Lord he must so put that the people could grasp it and act upon it. This is what our Lord has done in the most tender manner.

He reveals the Father. The things of God which He knows, He makes known unto us by His Holy Spirit, as we are able to bear them. We are to learn of Him. Some say that they will go from Nature up to Nature's God—they will do no such thing—the steps are much too steep for their feeble climbing! They fall into some such abyss of absurdity as evolution and come not near to God. You have not to go from Jesus Christ to God, for He Himself is God! "In Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. And you are complete in Him." Come, then, and learn of the great High Priest! His office, itself, is a compassionate one and

you may learn all of God from Him the more readily because He is meek and lowly of heart and will count it no drudgery to teach you the very A B Cs of Divine Truth.

But a high priest took the other side also—he was to communicate with God from men. Here, also, he needed the most tender spirit to rule his faculties and to move his affections. He must sit down and hear all the trembling petitions of troubled mothers who had come from the utmost end of Israel laden with their domestic burdens. He must listen to all the complaints of the oppressed, the woes of the afflicted, the trials of the poor, the perplexities of the distracted. And then, as a man of God, he was ordained to take all these things in prayer before the Host High and in fitter language to present the requests of the broken in heart. What a tender office! How few could carry it out!

Even some well-meaning ministers do not seem able to enter into the struggles of a seeking sinner, or into the conflicts of a tempted soul. Those who go to them, that they may enjoy their intercessions, are disappointed. Our High Priest is quite at home with mourners and enters into their case as a good physician understands the symptoms of his patients. When we tell our Lord the story of our inward grief, He understands it better than we do. He rightly reads our case and then wisely presents it before the Majesty on high, pleading His Sacrifice, that the Lord may deal graciously with us.

Beloved, this is what Jesus Christ will do for all who desire to speak with God. He is the "Interpreter, one of a thousand," by whom our sighs will be reported to Heaven! If you wish to communicate your needs to the great Father who is able to help in time of need—here is the Ambassador between earth and Heaven who can plead the cause of your soul at that Throne from which succor always comes! Is it not gracious on our Lord's part to undertake so tender an office for those who need it so greatly and have no other way of access to the God of Grace?

But if I understand the high priest's office aright, he had many things to do which come under this general description, but which might not suggest themselves if you did not have the items set before you. The high priest was one who had to deal with sin and judgment for the people. We read in Exodus 28:29, "Aaron shall bear the judgment of the children of Israel upon his heart before the Lord continually." In consequence, he was called upon to hear confessions of sin and pleas for pardon. Many came to him and acknowledged known transgressions, or wished for aid in discovering sins of ignorance.

As God's representative, he judged the errors of those who came to offer sacrifice for their sins and helped them to deal rightly in the things of God. This is a very tender post to occupy. No mere man is fitted to hear, as a rule, the confessions of all sorts of people and certainly he should not seek to do so. Yet the man whom God calls to feed His flock is forced, at times, to enter into the soul-conflicts of his fellow men and to hear the mournful story of their wanderings. And he needs great tenderness in so doing. We have a High Priest into whose ears we may pour all the confessions of our penitence without fear. Go and do so! It

is a wonderful easement to the mind to tell Jesus all. Men who have consciences that tear them to pieces will find perfect repose follows upon a full pouring out of their soul before the Lord Jesus. Our merciful High Priest will never make a harsh observation, nor ask a rasping question, nor pronounce a crushing sentence. Go to Him, only, for there is none like He. He will come so near to you that you shall unburden your soul at His feet.

No doubt the high priest was resorted to that he might console the sorrowful. It must have been a great relief for those who were of a sorrowful spirit, to go unto the sanctuary of the Lord and sit at the feet of a man of God who could remind the stricken one of the promises made to meet such sorrow. Only to tell the story was helpful. Mourners often get more comfort from telling their griefs than they do from the remarks of those to whom they unburden themselves. Go to Jesus, dear Friend, if a sharp grief is now gnawing at your heart. If it is a trouble which you could not tell to your father or your husband, go to Jesus with it! That holy woman, Hannah, when she sat in the court of the Lord's house, got but little at first from Eli—she was telling her Lord her secret—but the aged priest thought that she was drunk because her lips were moving and she spoke not aloud!

He rebuked her roughly. But when she explained herself, then he bade her go in peace, for her prayer would be granted her—and she went away no more sad. Jesus will make no mistake as to your meaning, dear Friend, even though you should be as one drunk with sorrow. Go to your chamber all alone. Tell Jesus your troubles and He will meet it in the fullness of His compassion and wisdom. Through Him the Comforter shall come to you and your sorrow shall be turned into joy! Try it. I cannot preach to you this morning with any power of words, but words are not needed if you will put everything to the test which I tell you concerning the tender-hearted Savior. Hasten to lay Rabshakeh's letter

before your Lord! Pour out the wormwood and the gall before Him—He knows their bitterness and He will surely make them to be swallowed up in victory. This is the purpose of His office and He will not fail in it.

The high priest would hear, also, the desire and wishes of the people. When men in Israel had some great longing, some overwhelming desire, they not only prayed in private but they would make a journey up to the Temple to ask the high priest to present their petitions before the Lord. Hannah only told Eli her heart's longing after it had been gratified, for she could not have summoned courage to mention so special a desire to a man who had so harshly judged her. She had evidently gone to Shiloh to make petition for a child, since her husband's other wife had been cruel to her because of her barrenness. She told Eli that the Lord had heard her and then she consulted him as to the dedication of her son to the Lord.

My Friend, you may have some very peculiar, delicate desire as to spiritual things that only God and your own soul may know, but fear not to mention it to your tender High Priest who will know your meaning and deal graciously with you! It was the high priest's business to instruct and to reprove the people. To instruct is delightful, but to reprove is

difficult. Only a tender spirit can wisely utter rebuke. Israel's high priest needed to be meek as Moses in his rebukes of the erring. Our Lord Jesus Christ tells us our faults in tones of love. His rebukes never break our heart. He never upbraids in bitterness, though He does so in faithfulness. Oh, the tenderness of Christ! I feel my subject deeply, but I cannot speak it as I would. He has been most gracious in correcting me. I know His Word is true: "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten." We can take anything from Jesus—His hands make the bitter sweet.

There are men whom you would shun in the hour of your wounding even though you believe that they would do their best to help you, for you do not feel that you could reveal your heart to them, nor feel happy to be under obligation to them. Their kindness is hard and cold. Their counsel is without the sweetening of compassion. They are as keen as a sword and as cutting. It may be they are so much above us that we cannot reach up to them, nor expect them to reach down to us. But there are other men, blessed among their fellows, who seem to be like havens for ships—you rejoice to cast anchor under their shelter. You feel, "I could tell that man anything. I know that he would have patience with me and pity for me, and that his heart would go out towards me."

Now, Beloved, you will often be disappointed if you select a man or woman to be your confidante. But if you will resort to the Lord Jesus, whom God has commissioned to be High Priest for this very end and purpose, you will find Him just the Friend you need. He loves the troubled, for "in all their affliction He was afflicted." He is very careful of the feebleminded and of the little ones, for is it not written—"He shall gather the lambs with His arms and carry them in His bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young"? When circumstances are peculiarly trying, Jesus is peculiarly tender. When we are grieved, He is gentle. Did you ever hear any of His people say of their Lord, that He is overbearing? Did His spouse, in the song, ever say that her Beloved had a rough side to His hand, or a cold place in His heart?

He can and does chide, for His love is wise, but he has much pity and His love knows no limit. His heart is made of tenderness and His soul melts for love of His chosen. We adore our High Priest, not only for the greatness of His merit, but for the sweetness of His mercy. I wish I could fitly speak of Him. But this much I must and will say—Come to Him and rest in Him, for He calls you. He is near at all times and in all places, and you can come to Him while you sit in the pew, or when you walk by the way. Come, you that labor and are heavy laden, and lay your burdens at His feet! Come, you whose souls sink down within you under a sense of sin, come to Him who, as your great High Priest, has offered a guilt-removing Sacrifice! He sits at the door of the house of mercy—He waits to be gracious. This is my first head.

II. Now, secondly, as our Lord Jesus has a tender office, so, next, HE HAS TENDER FEELINGS. "We have not a High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our

infirmities." Note that it is not said, "touched by," but touched with. Many a man can be touched by the sorrow of another, but he is not touched with that sorrow. He has feeling, but not fellow feeling. He pities the sorrowing, but he does not sorrow with them.

How many of the rich are sorry for the poor, but they were never poor themselves, so they may be touched by the woe of poverty, but they are not touched with a feeling for it. Our Lord is touched with a feeling of our infirmities. You are touched and He is touched at the same time. A pang shoots through my heart—that pang has been felt by my Lord, also. A grief has stirred the waters of my spirit and the spirit of the great High Priest has moved in harmony with me. They say, but I know not that it is true, that when the strings of one harp are touched, if there is another harp in the room, it gently responds in unison, though not touched by any hand.

Assuredly it is so with the Believer and his Lord. Touch any one of His members and you touch the Head of the spiritual body. Your present trouble is upon the heart of our Well-Beloved—

"He, in His measure, feels afresh What every member bears."

It is not merely true that He is apprised of our infirmities, since the Lord has said, "I know their sorrows," but He "is touched with the feeling of our infirmities." Hold that thought! It is a great matter that our God should note the trials of His people, that His condescending Omniscience should concern itself with their everyday distresses! But this word goes further—He feels with His people—He is "touched with the feeling of our infirmities." The sense of feeling is more intense, vivid and acute than the sense of sight. It is one thing to see pain, but another thing to be touched with the feeling of it. Treasure up this view of your Lord's sympathy, for it may be a great support in the hour of agony and a grand restorative in the day of weakness.

Note again, "The feeling of our infirmities." Whose infirmities? Does not "our" mean yours and mine? Jesus is touched with the feeling of your infirmities and mine. You, my venerable Brother, and you, my younger Sister—you who have come here from a fresh grave and you that will return to a bed shortly to be emptied of your dearest one—you that are slandered and you that are sick. You that can scarcely hold up your head for sadness—and you that are distracted with fear—He is "touched with a feeling of our infirmities." I do not know how you feel about it, but the text draws me very near to all of you who are under infirmities even as I am. We nestle together in that little word, "our." We meet in the hospital ward of that other word, "infirmities." The best of all is that Jesus meets us all there and is touched with the feeling of the infirmities, not only of renowned divines in their pulpits and of great saints in their closets, but with "our" infirmities—even ours, who are "less than the least of all saints."

Note well that word, "infirmities"—"touched with the feeling of our infirmities." If it had only said sorrows, there would have been a sound of the sublime about it. But our

Master stoops to "infirmities." He is not only touched with the feeling of the heroic endurance of the martyrs, but He sympathizes with those of us who are not heroes but can only plead—"the spirit, indeed, is willing, but the flesh is weak." While you are entreating the Lord, thrice, to take away the thorn in the flesh He is sympathizing with you! Is it not well that it does not say, touched with the feeling of our patience? Our self-denial, our valor? But "with a feeling of our infirmities"—that is, our weakness, our littleness—the points in which we are not strong nor happy. Our pain, our depression, our trembling, our sensitiveness—He is touched with these though He falls not into the sin which so often comes of them. Hold fast this Truth of God, for it may greatly tend to your consolation some day.

Jesus is touched, not with a feeling of your strength, but of your infirmity. Down here, poor, feeble nothings affect the heart of their great High Priest on high who is crowned with glory and honor! As the mother feels the weakness of her babe, so does Jesus feel with the poorest, saddest and weakest of His chosen! Why is this, Brothers and Sisters? Let us think of it a while! Our Lord has a tender Nature. Some people are not sympathetic and never will be. Their spirit is not generous. We are all made of clay, but some clay is stiffer and more gritty than another—and in some cases very hard grit is in it. Some men have no more feeling than granite. They will say about the collection today, "I shall not give anything to the hospitals. Let the people take care of themselves. If they were more thrifty they would have a little laid by for a rainy day and would not need to have hospitals provided for them."

This gentleman can supply wagon-loads of the same sort of hard material. I know you, my Friend. I have known you, too, a long time. I was going to say, "I would be happy to attend your funeral," but I will not say so, lest it seem that I am hardening myself under your influence. And besides, there are so many of your order, that one more or less is of no great consequence. You know the people who are always griping against charity and finding a shilling's worth of reasons why they should not give a penny. Such people will not willingly put anything into the box—but as it will come round to them, anyway—possibly they will do so for fear of being known!

Jesus, our Lord, is tender by Nature. Amid the bliss of Heaven He foresaw the miseries of earth and resolved to leave His Glory that He might come here to rescue man. His innate tenderness brought Him from the Throne to the manger, from the manger to the Cross. Our Lord is not only tender of Nature but quick of understanding as to the infirmities of men. Lack of sense often prevents men being sensitive and sympathetic. If you have never suffered a disease, you need a little imagination to realize it so as to be touched with the feeling of it. I noticed a very able address delivered by Mr.

Hutchinson before the Lord Mayor, last Friday, in which he advises a person who mourns his lack of sympathy to go for a week to his usual city vocation with a black patch over one eye, or wearing a wooden leg.

"If this does not effect the business," he says, "let him choose some leisure day in the country in bright spring and resolutely, for 24 hours, keep a bandage firmly placed over both eyes. His organization is, I fear, in this direction, well-near hopeless if next morning he does not feel inclined to send a liberal donation to some hospital that has for its mission the prevention of blindness." I have no doubt that improvable persons might be all the better for some such attempt to gain feeling for their fellows. The same doctor thinks that the wearing of a truss, or a spinal apparatus for one day might be a help to tenderness.

I will not urge these modes of cure, but the thought is good and it might be tried in other directions. Suppose the squire of the parish who thinks 10 or 12 shillings abundant wages for a week, should say to his lady, "We have always said that our agricultural laborers have quite enough money to live upon—let us try their fare. We will leave this house for a week and take one of the old cottages in the village and live, all of us, on the wages we pay our men." What a capital school for social economy! How well would some people know the value of our silver currency and of the copper coinage, also! Only we would like members of Parliament to have a longer experience than one week, lest it might be a pleasant change from feasting to fasting! Say six months for the honorable member! This might foster sympathy.

Our blessed Lord had real experience and, beside that, the faculty of being able to put Himself into the place of sufferers and so to be "acquainted with grief." His quick understanding made Him realize, as High Priest, the sorrows of His people. Too many people are so wrapped up in their own grief that they have no room in their souls for sympathy. Do you not know them? The first thing when they rise in the morning is the dreadful story of the night they have passed. Ah, dear, and they have not quite eaten a hearty breakfast before their usual pain is somewhere or other coming over them! They must have the special care and pity of the whole household.

All the day long the one great business is to keep everybody aware of how much the great sufferer is enduring. It is this person's patent right to monopolize all the sympathy which the market can supply and then there will be none to spare for the rest of the afflicted! If you are greatly taken up with self, there is not enough of you to run over to anybody else. How different this from our Lord, who never cried, "Have pity upon Me! Have pity upon Me, O My friends!" He is described as "enduring the Cross, despising the shame." So strong was He in love that, though He saved others, Himself He could not save! Though He succored the afflicted, none succored Him!

Men who are wrapped up in their own glories are not sympathetic. Is it not a fine thing to spend life in contemplating one's own magnificence? Those who are amazed at their own greatness have no thought to spare for the suffering. "No," says the man, "the masses must obey the laws of supply and demand and get on as well as they can. Let them do as I have done. I might have been as poor as they are if I had shown as little push and enterprise as

they do." The gentleman talks on a great scale and he has no sympathy for the small woes of common life. His sympathy is needed at home and his charity begins there—and is so satisfied with its beginning that it never goes any further.

Our Lord is at the opposite pole from all this. He never glorified Himself. He "made Himself of no reputation and took upon Him the form of a servant," thus displaying the tenderness of His heart. Let me say, once more, our Lord is tender to us without any effort—not only because of the reasons I have mentioned, but because He has made our cause His own. We are His friends and does not a friend act tenderly to a friend? We are more than that—we are married to Him and shall not a husband be tender to his spouse? More than that, "we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones"—and shall not the Head feel every pain of the members? It must be so! Jesus has so identified Himself with His own redeemed that He must forevermore be in living, loving, lasting sympathy with them!

III. I must now notice very briefly, in the third place, that our LORD HAD TENDER TRAINING. Hear what Paul says of it. He "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." Beloved, our Lord was tried as we are—that is one meaning of the passage. As to all manner of bodily ills, He was subject to them all. Hungry, weary, faint, without a place to lay His head, He was tried in all the points to which poverty exposes its victims. "He Himself took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses." Even to the death-sweat and the cry, "I thirst!" Jesus has gone along our pathway of pain and grief. No step of it has been spared Him.

Our Lord has been tried mentally. There is never an exceeding heaviness, nor a sore amazement, nor a wound of treachery, nor a stab of ingratitude of which He did not feel. The sharpest arrows in the quiver of anguish have been shot

at His dear heart. "Oh," says one, "I do not think anybody has been tried as I have been by cruel unkindness." Say not so, for Jesus was forsaken of all and betrayed by the friend in whom He trusted. As to spiritual distress, our Lord has been there, also. Where any sinless foot could go, He has gone. The abyss has heard Him cry, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" Tried in all points from above and from below, from without and from within, He can sympathize with every form of tribulation.

"Like as we are." Who are meant by the "we"? That again is like the "our"—it means you and I. Jesus Christ passed through a training similar to ours. The discipline of life for all the children is much the same. The first-born is tried as the rest of the household are tried. But the text says, "tempted" and that bears a darker meaning than "tried." Our Lord could never have fallen the victim of temptation, but through life He was the object of it. He could never have been so tempted as that the sin of a temptation could spot His soul. Far from it! Yet remember that in the wilderness He was tempted to unbelief The Evil One said, "If you are

the Son of God." Most of us know how he can hiss that "if into our ears. "If you are the Son of God."

Upon our Lord that "if" fell painfully but harmlessly. Then came the temptation to help Himself and anticipate the Providence of God by selfish action—"Command that these stones be made bread." We, too, have had this rash act suggested to us. The tempter has said, "You could get out of your difficulties by doing a wrong thing—do it! It is not a very wrong thing, either—indeed, it is questionable whether it might not be justifiable under the circumstances! In vain will you wait for the Lord—put out your own hand and provide for yourself! The way of faith in God is slow and you are in pressing need." Our Lord was tempted just like that. When no bread in the house is made the background of a great temptation, remember that our Lord has undergone the counterpart of that temptation.

Next, the Lord Jesus was tempted to presumption. Set on the pinnacle of the temple, He heard a voice saying, "If You are the Son of God cast Yourself down from here, for it is written, He shall give His angels charge over You, to keep You." Are you haunted by a similar suggestion to presume? Is it suggested that you quit your old standing and try the new notions, or that you speculate in business, or that you profess to understand what God has never taught you? Resist earnestly! Ah, dear Friends, your Lord knows all about this and as He escaped that temptation, you shall do the same. Then Satan—how often I have wondered at him—dared to say to Christ, "All these things will I give You if You will fall down and worship me."

Picture the Lord of angels, with all the royalty of Heaven shining on His brow, and the black fiend daring to say, "Fall down and worship me." It may be that a like temptation is coming home to you—live for gold, live for fame, live for pleasure—in some form or other worship the devil and renounce faith in God. "Worship me," says the Prince of Darkness—"take to the new doctrines. Practice the current worldliness. Leave the Word of God for the wisdom of the philosophers." In some such form will the temptation come, but even though Satan could fulfill his promise and all the world should be ours, we are bound to resist unto the death and we are encouraged to do so by the fact that we are upon the old ground where our Redeemer fought and conquered!

He can enter into the distress which this temptation is causing you, for He has felt the same. How the Lord Jesus must have started back with horror from the suggestions of the devil! He never entertained them for an instant, but the mere passing of those temptations over the drum of His ear and the apprehension of His mind must have caused Him the sharpest wounding—for He hated sin with immeasurable hate. Beloved, our Lord has endured so much of temptation that He will be tender towards you this morning, "touched with the feeling of your infirmities," because He was tempted at all points as you are. Even though temptation follows you as the serpent which bites at the horses' heels, your Lord knows it and will deliver you.

IV. I am happy to come to my last point, through Divine aid. OUR LORD HAS A PERFECT TENDERNESS. As I read the verse—"In all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin," I thought I heard you say, "But that is just the pinch of the matter. He cannot sympathize with me in sin and that is my great trouble!" Brother, do you wish that your Lord had become a sinner like yourself? Abhor the idea! It would be blasphemy if understood and indulged. You see at once that you could not wish anything of the kind! But listen to me—do not imagine that if the Lord Jesus had sinned He would have been any more tender toward you—for sin is always of a hardening nature.

If the Christ of God could have sinned, He would have lost the perfection of His sympathetic Nature. It needs perfection of heart to lay self all aside and to be touched with a feeling of the infirmities of others. Listen again—do you

not think that sympathy in sin would be a poisonous sweet? A child, for instance, has done wrong and he has been wisely chastened by his father. I have known cases in which a foolish mother has sympathized with the child. This may seem affectionate, but it is wickedly injurious to the child. Such conduct would lead the child to love the evil which it is necessary he should hate. Have you not felt, yourself, that in unbelieving moments it would have been a great evil for a Christian Brother to have petted you in your unbelief? Have you not felt it was far better for you to have heard a bracing word of upbraiding?

We ought not to wish for sympathy in wrong. Sympathy in sin is conspiracy in crime. We must show sympathy with sinners but not with their sins. If, then, you dream that our Lord Jesus would have derived any gracious power to sympathize with us from Himself sinning, you greatly err! Such sympathy, had it been possible, would have been to the last degree injurious to us. Inasmuch as He had no sin we can drink in His words of comfort without fear. His oil and wine will bring no evil to our wounds. His holy experience comforts us and puts us in no risk. It is a blessed thing for a sinner to have the sympathies of one who never sinned! Rejoice, you people of God! Rejoice in this, that the Sinless One has perfect sympathy with you in your infirmities! He sympathizes all the more graciously because He is without sin.

I have done when I have said this—if our Lord was thus sympathetic, let us be tender to our fellow men. Let us not restrain our tender feelings, but encourage them. Love is the brightest of the Graces of God and most sweetly adorns the Gospel. Love to the sorrowing, the suffering, the needy, is a charming flower which grows in the garden of a renewed heart. Cultivate it! Make your love practical! Love the poor not in word only, but in actual gifts to them! Love the sick and help them to a cure! Today I cannot conceive of you as thinking of the sick poor of London without wishing that you could house them all, relieve them all with medical skill and then send them for a little respite into the country, or by the seaside, to gather strength!

It is a painful fact that our great hospitals have so many beds unoccupied while patients are in need of them! As a governor of St. Thomas's Hospital, I have seen, from time to time, how the endowments have decreased in value through the agricultural depression and the lowering of rents. Surely London is rich enough to make up the deficit of 100,000 pounds! To do this the collections must be at least doubled. Will you allow the poor to pine in their narrow rooms? Shall they perish for lack of surgical care and medical help? Do you call yourselves followers of the tender Jesus? Do you hope to be saved through his compassion?

On this Hospital Sunday I charge rich Christians to delay no longer but to be touched with the feeling of the sufferings of those who are made of one flesh with them. Let all of us do our best. I will not insult you by pleading with you as though you were unwilling. You are eager to give for His dear sake who sympathizes with you so tenderly and helps you so graciously. Let the collection be made at once!

PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON— Hebrews 4:14-16; 5:1-14. HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—306, 328, 326.